/60 cont./

881 [302] b) they must paint the face and the whole body with annatto in order to cover up the yellowness and not become prey to amariuak;

881 c) they must not raise their eyes nor look toward the hills, where they think the mauarí live;

784 d) they must not bathe nor go for water, in order not to be perhaps possessed by rató;

[292] e) they must use moriche sandals whenever, out of necessity, they must put their feet on the ground;

f) they must abstain, as has been said above, from certain foodstuffs.

881 128. There are two somewhat more curious things while the indisposition lasts, and they are: absolute silence, to which they are constrained, and whipping, which they are given each time they come in or go out of the rancho for some necessity.

881 841 521 The Indians insist on saying that the speech of a menstruating Indian woman is extremely pernicious; for that reason no one speaks to them; and when the days have passed and she wishes to return to daily conversation, the woman must address a stick and say to it: "Are you here?" Then the tree will dry up and the same thing will happen to any Indian man to whom she addresses herself. /61/ "This," Ernesto writes, "seems not to be true, but it certainly is their custom."

881 The whipping is not in any way at all a flagellation nor anything like it; it is only a ceremony, which is done by the old woman who is caring for the girl every time the latter goes out of the rancho, so that the evil spirits may consider her to be something scornful. One day after the indisposition has passed, at dawn when the cocks crow, they bring her down from the hammock, seat her on a little bench, and the oldest man or the master of the house flails her with some strings made of [593] moriche fiber and recites over her a certain charm. "By means of this whipping," adds Ernesto, "when the women get angry with their daughters for being hard to manage, they customarily

881 /61 cont./
say: Let her be, for when she reaches puberty they will whip
593 her."

881 129. In order to demonstrate that women must submit
538 to these traditional observances, the Pemón have a great number of stories and legends in which it is said, for example:

a) That a girl, during the days of the retreat, went to the river to get water and began to play with a little fish which was tickling her feet, without knowing that it was a disguised rató, and became pregnant to the astonishment of her parents, who knew that she had had no dealings with men. That was the origin of the legendary Apichauai.

b) That another girl in similar circumstances without thinking took down a birds' nest with its little eggs, which were not eggs of a bird but snake's eggs, as a result of which she became the mother of Aramarí, another legendary personage, half man and half snake.

c) That another girl in the same circumstances went to a bachaquero /evidently from bachaco, an antlike insect/ with other Indians at the time of the gathering of those and that she was eaten from the waist down by the keuchí, a kind of swallow which hunts bachacos at the time of their swarming and their egg-laying.

d) That another girl, who went to the river when the other Indians were poisoning fish with verbasco, began to prepare sakura and with the waste matter that she threw in the water caused such a disturbance among the mauarís that they caused a great flood from which only a few were able to save themselves in the forks of trees, etc.

881 130. In this same period they customarily submit both
304 the boys as well as the girls to incisions, or papuek, with which they tattoo themselves, not for beauty but in order to pour into the said incisions vegetable substances so that they will be good hunters, so that they will be diligent, so that they will not fall from their mounts when riding, so that they will be good chewers of kachirí, so that they will be assiduous, etc.

/76 cont./

584 their daughters (and the more so when they find themselves
581 older and less able to work) that they not marry an Indian who is too young, or an Indian who does not know how to weave baskets, sebucanes, guayares, etc..., or Indians of short stature; that on the contrary they prefer one who is already mature, an early riser, one who wets his knees with the saliva of the stars (dew), one who stains his arms with mud and with earthworms' feces or the flesh caught by his fishhook, one who has undergone the incisions or "oaouek" and the "eseunakipa" or indigestion /sic -- "ingestion"/ through the nasal passage of magic remedies so that he may be a clever hunter and fisher, etc.

152 Possibly the Indians are of a less violent nature than we; and there is no doubt but that they are more long-suffering and patient, they hide their feelings better, and thus they manage to have a more placid life.

576 167. Rules of etiquette. The Indians follow their rules in greetings and farewells, in their modest banquets for guests and strangers, and in discussions themselves.

576 For those who like to blame and scorn the natives, I can
● 593 transcribe a small detail of their daily life: The Indian asks for water from his wife, and she, if there is any, will bring him kachirí after having tried it herself. When I asked them why they did that and why they asked for it in that way, they told me that they always asked for water in case there should be no kachirí, so that the woman would not be embarrassed. And she always /77/ tries everything before serving it as a sign of union and mutual confidence.

[609] Without an order from her husband a woman will never present food or drink to any strange man.

[264] On the arrival of strangers, the women will eat apart and after the men.

512 Let it also be noted that, once the "atapontén seré" has been said, it is time to lie down; the serious and formal Indians (and I say it because there is no lack of more or less headstrong

/90 cont./

583 196. To constitute a family, in general, no other thing
584 is influential except the mutual inclination of the parties and
[593] their complete freedom; in such a way that marriages are frequently made against the will of the parents, sometimes on trips or in distant rancherias and even with individuals of a different tribe; and that the return of a son or a daughter, after a long absence, to his or her parents, introducing to them the new daughter-in-law or new son-in-law, which so often appears in stories, is a faithful transcription of real life.

583 Material interest then customarily flourishes on the lips of
606 the woman's progenitors with respect to their son-in-law, since they consider him to have benefitted (as in fact he has) through the acquisition of the daughter raised by them with so much work, and as a consequence they usually ask him to help them in their chores or in the building of houses; but from this it should not be inferred that this is a matter of purchase-sale nor of inferiority of the woman.

621 197. Concerning the lack of ultra-family organization,
622 the so often cited Juan Pimentel says in his geographic report
643 of Caracas Province the following: "There are not nor has it
[651] been possible to confirm that in all this province of Caracas there have been any caciques or lords of estate or seigniory, nor do they pay tribute to anyone."

105 And more extensively he says in Chapter 15: "The natives
[622] of this province did not have nor do they have any government or police in matters of justice nor in anything which resembles this; it is all personal independence, for as there are not, nor have there been, caciques or lords, they have not had anyone
[264] to obey, and thus Peter is as good as his master; because when they eat they get together by house or barrios, and the first to stick in his hand might be the lowest rather than his better,
[554] and the boy rather than the old man; for among them there is
756 neither superiority nor betterness by way of lineage nor in any other respect; except that, if in some way there is some respected Indian, it is by way of being a piache, as has been said,

105 /90 cont./
[756] or that some Indian, be he a good worker and that he gets drunk
[554] often or has many women, daughters /sic/ and sons-in-law and
daughters-in-law, whence proceeds some good kinsmen and
● [593] these obey him as an elder relative; or by dint of valor they
respect one who is so and in war has killed some Indian or more;
and in conformity with those whom he has killed they make
him that many crowns and give him that many names."

114 This and other simple reports, made without affectation and straightforewardly, show very clearly the exaggeration of some old chroniclers and some modern /91/ fiction writers when they describe various caciques in the style of classic histories, but very far from the plain truth and the unvarnished truth of ethnography.

Chapter XXIV

Do the Indians Have a Religion?

000 198. Religiousness, a human characteristic? 199. The difficulty in studying noncodified religions. 200. Comparison with the study of language. 201. Preconceptions of the missionaries?

198. Another of the characteristics generally attributed to mankind is religiousness. "The former Mission companion," from the way in which he asks me the question, is also among those who believe that there cannot be a race or tribe, a horde or whatever, without religion.

This is what Cicero was thinking when he said: "There is no nation either so savage or so fierce that, even when it be ignorant of which God it ought to have, does not know that it ought to have one." And thus thought and still think, doubtless, the majority of men. But in this, as in everything, there is no

423 The lack of formal title to their land under the Venezuelan legal system
648 presents, for the moment, no special problem as regards land used for dwelling, farming, hunting, and fishing. There is no pressure on such land and at present no tendency by non-Kamarakotos to compete for it, although a colonization scheme such as has been suggested might suddenly present the Indians with a
316 very serious and perhaps, for them, insoluble problem. They are, however,
423 already aware of possible difficulty as regards title to the gold deposits in their
643 territory, even though the gold so far discovered has not been sufficient to
[648] cause a serious invasion of their remote region. Their reasoned attitude regarding this is to establish title to the gold deposits for the cacique. In their consideration he is not, however, a personal owner but only a custodian on behalf of the whole group, just as household property can be considered as belonging, in a rather vague but real sense, to the head of the household but is freely used by all its members. There is a rather close analogy to the crown lands of a constitutional monarchy, where title is said to belong to the king but he is in fact an owner only as he represents the state as a whole and the property is actually communal.

This communal nature of the mines that "belong" to the cacique is shown in practice by the fact that any adult male member of the tribe has the right of working the mines and that the gold found by any man becomes his personal property without any deduction of royalty, rental, or tribute. Even further than this, if a particularly rich pocket is discovered it is customary to notify the other members of the tribe so that anyone who wishes to can share in it.

422 Movable possessions are more rigidly owned than is land and in this case
425 the ownership is usually to be considered as purely personal and not as communal even in the sense that household lands belong to the family group rather than specifically to the to?-esa? as an individual. Here the principles of ownership arising from manufacture, as between different households, and from use,
[437] as within a household, are dominant. Thus a new hammock made by a woman of a given household is the property of that household and its barter to another group may be by the maker or by the to?-esa? as representing the household, but if it is assigned to and used by a particular member of the household, it is
[437] his, or her, personal property. So, too, in barter or purchase of goods from
939 other tribes or from Venezuelans, this may be done on a purely personal basis or by the to?-esa? for his household and subsequent personal ownership is established by the individual who uses the object or material in question.

[126] In our trading with the Indians, it was noteworthy, for instance, that a basket made, of course, by a man but already in use by a woman, was not sold except with the woman's consent and that the price was generally payable to her or for her benefit. On the other hand, a new basket was sold by and for the
461 maker. In paying for labor, the women gen[illegible]y spent the sums due them on
465 themselves and on the young children, not [illegible] their husbands. Commonly a man
● [593] would trade his labor for goods for his family rather than for himself.

Indifference to Suffering.

157 154 Indifference to suffering is popularly considered to be a universal Indian trait and is usually roundly condemned on moral and social grounds. The Kamarakotos show this (to us) rather unpleasing characteristic in considerable degree, but its basis is evident and it cannot be severely condemned if it is well understood. It seems anomalous that a tribe should be notably kind, mild, affectionate, and anxious not to inflict pain, and at the same time apparently apathetic toward the suffering of others, but the two traits are not really incompatible and are, indeed, largely different aspects of the same characteristic. They hate pain and, being sympathetic, dislike inflicting it. But sympathy means in fact (as the word does in origin) the sharing of feeling. To be sympathetic with a person in pain means in some measure to share the pain. The Kamarakotos tend to withdraw from pain, a perfectly normal psychological reaction, and the very fact that they are sympathetic makes them tend strongly to withdraw from a person in pain simply because it is painful for them not to withdraw. This, too, is a normal reaction, whether conscious or subconscious, and it is shared by most persons in our society. But in our society most of us carefully hide this reaction, partly in hypocrisy, because it is contrary to our social mores, and partly from the better motive of hoping to alleviate the pain of the sufferer. It is not contrary to Kamarakoto mores, more natural or, if you like, more primitive than ours, and according to their beliefs and knowledge, there is no good reason for attending to suffering because the ordinary person can do nothing to alleviate pain. If the pain is natural, nothing is possible but waiting for death or recovery. If it is supernatural, only a skilled piache can hope to remedy it. In either case withdrawal from the suffering person is not only perfectly proper but also the only sensible course, granting the Kamarakoto premises.

157 154 758 Despite this tendency toward withdrawal, the Kamarakotos certainly feel real sorrow for the suffering of anyone near to them and, within their own system, real consideration. The latter is well shown by the fact that when a person is ill they make every effort to do what little they believe can be done, notably to get a piache (or during our stay to persuade our doctor) to attend the victim. They do not sit by the bedside (hammock-side), prepare special food, soothe the fevered brow, and the like, because they see no benefit in these things, and they endeavor to continue their normal activities and to put the sufferer out of their minds as much as possible.

Children.

152 593 There is much and obvious personal affection and family pride. Kissing is unknown and casual embracing rare, but between husband and wife, or wives,

152 parents and children, and friends there are evident expressions of pleasure and
[593] consideration, exchanges of gifts, and efforts to please. Children play together
857 in greatest amity (Figs. 81, 82),[2] and it is common to see boy chums who are almost always together and often stand arm in arm.

858 Children in general lead unusually happy and secure lives. Although not
855 given tasks beyond their strength, they are not treated as something apart from adult life but are integral members of society like everyone else and share in all activities on an equal basis. They are well treated and deferred to as much
[861] as one adult would defer to another. They seldom need disciplining, because they act much like their elders beyond a greater playfulness, which is quite innocent, and no adult activities are categorically forbidden them. We never saw a child disciplined and saw few cases of their needing it, in our opinion.
854 The small babies cry infrequently because they usually get what they want without crying. Several times when a baby cried for something that an older child had, the older child gave it, even if a little reluctantly.

Until they can walk, children almost never leave their mothers. They are carried everywhere in the baby-sling, to such an extent that a sling with a
[853] baby in it seems part of an adult woman's costume (Fig. 83).[2] The baby never feels insecure, because he is always with his mother, and he is never hungry, because her breast is always there for him to help himself. He is an honored and
153 protected member of society from his first breath. There can be little doubt
854 that much of the placidity and amiability of the people has its origin in the baby-sling. Most civilized mothers could learn a great deal about the psychological, if not the physical, care of infants from the Kamarakotos. Their system does not, as some theorists would suppose, produce what we would call "spoiled" children, but produces happy and reasonable ones.

847 Some Carib tribes have practiced extensive infanticide and perhaps some
[1 21] still do. Of course the Kamarakotos deny this in their case, and it is so contrary to their characters that they are doubtless truthful in this denial. They
842 seem greatly to desire children. Orphans are adopted, usually but not always
[597] by a paternal uncle, as a matter of course and are in every respect treated like their own children by the foster parents. No woman said or seemed to feel that she had too many, or even enough, children.

Modesty.

834 The Kamarakotos are extremely modest, but only on one point. Adults
[514] do not expose the pubic region, even before members of the same sex. Men and women show no particular reticence in performing physiological functions in plain sight of persons of either sex, but manage to do so in such a way that
[291] the pubic region is not in view. Very small boys are not embarrassed at being quite naked, but as soon as the loincloth is put on they begin to show modesty.

[2] [see pp. 265a and 265b, category 116 - Analyst]
[2] [see p. 280a, category 116 - Analyst]
[text continues on p. 266]